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AUTHOR Derryberry, Carla; And Others
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ABSTRACT

A career aspiration profile was administered to 1,350 randomly selected students from Houston area high schools, two-year colleges, and four-year institutions in order to determine the factors which still function as barriers to the entrance of both women and men into non-traditional careers. The career profile solicited information concerning: (1) student occupational aspirations; (2) the salaries students expected to earn; (3) their future educational plans; (4) the role of parents and other adults in influencing occupational choice; (5) the occupational training desired by students; (6) the job-seeking skills they needed to develop; (7) student attitudes concerning the sex-appropriateness of 22 occupational-technical fields; (8) the reasons students felt certain occupations were not appropriate for their sex; (9) the reasons they would be reluctant to enter a non-traditional career; and (10) student perceptions of the usefulness of various methods of recruiting students into non-traditional careers. Summary findings, based on responses from 553 men and 736 women, indicate that while students at all levels felt that most occupational fields were suitable for both sexes, the majority of the respondents still expected to enter occupations traditionally associated with their sex. The survey report details findings for each questionnaire item and provides summary conclusions and the questionnaire. (JP)

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FOR BREAKING
with tradition
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today's careers
Houston Community College System

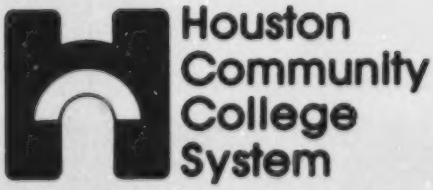
SUMMARY REPORT
JUNE, 1979

JC 800 480

Exemplary Program for Recruitment into Nontraditional Careers

Summary Report
June, 1979

(REVISED)



An affirmative action, equal opportunity educational institution

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Houston
Community
College
System

22 Waugh Drive, Houston, Texas 77007
Phone (713) 869-5021

May 31, 1979

To the Reader:

As part of its commitment to provide equal educational opportunities to all students, the Houston Community College System, with funding from the Texas Education Agency, undertook a one year project beginning July 1, 1978. The focus of the project was the elimination of sex barriers to occupational-technical education. The primary objectives of the project were:

1. To illuminate the sex barriers which are preventing both males and females from entering nontraditional careers.

2. To conduct a recruitment campaign aimed at reducing these barriers in order to effect a 10% increase in enrollment in nontraditional occupational-technical programs.

The purpose of this report is to present in summary form the major findings of the research study. A more complete presentation of the data may be found in the final report of the project to the Texas Education Agency ("Exemplary Program for Recruitment of Persons Into Non-Traditional Careers," Texas Education Agency Project No. 89230135).

It is hoped that the results of this project will be of use to other institutions involved in the effort to increase the participation of both males and females in all areas of occupational-technical education.

Carla Derryberry
Project Director

Patricia Davis
Project Specialist

Madeleine Wright
Project Consultant

INTRODUCTION

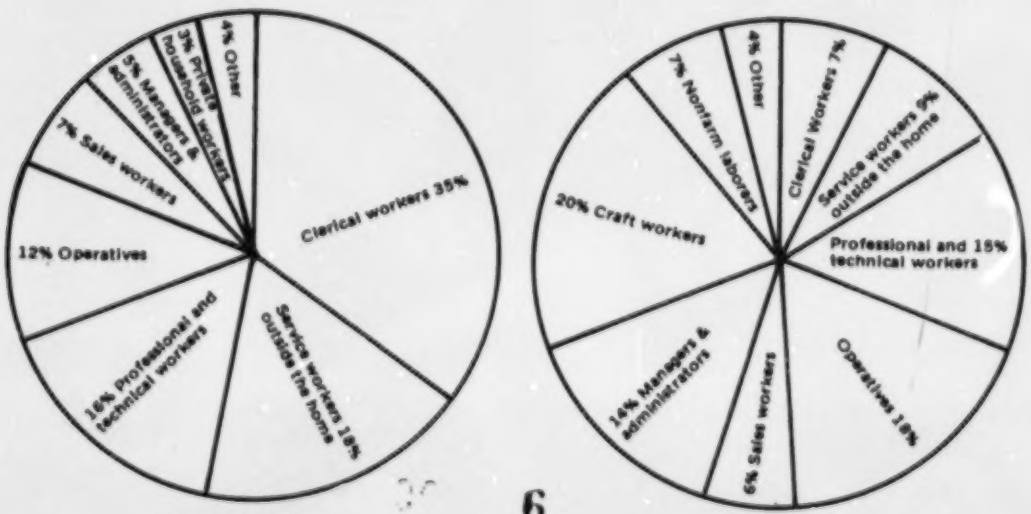
WOMEN, MEN, AND THE WORLD OF WORK

According to the Department of Labor (1975), one of the most significant changes in the United States economy over the past twenty-five years has been the number of women who have entered the labor market. As of 1977, there were over 40 million women in the labor force, twice as many as in 1950. These women accounted for over 40% of all workers. Furthermore, it is predicted that demand will see a continued increase in the number of women of all ages and status entering the labor market (Oppenheimer, 1973). Nine out of every ten women will work at some point in their lives. The question is no longer, "Will I work?", but rather, "What occupation will I choose?"

Historically, occupational distribution has been different for men and women, and this distribution has remained fairly stable despite the significant changes in the labor force. In the last thirty years, the answers given by both men and women to the question, "What occupation will I choose?" have changed very little. The vast majority of both men and women continue to be employed in occupations dominated by their sex.

As indicated by Figure 1, the largest categories of female and male workers are clerical workers and craft workers respectively. However, the number of males employed in clerical work and the number of female craft workers are very small. Overall, women make up 77% of the clerical workers, and men make up 96% of all craft workers. Although males and females are almost equally employed in professions, these too, are segregated by sex. Women make up 98% of the registered nurses, 70% of the teachers, 82% of the librarians, and 72% of the health technologists. These occupations account for almost 70% of the female professionals. Males, on the other hand, comprise 80% of the computer specialists, 88% of the physicians, and 90% of the engineers.

FIGURE 1. THE DISTRIBUTION OF MALES AND FEMALES IN THE MAJOR OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS



BARRIERS

Legislation prohibiting discrimination in employment has gone a long way in breaking down the external barriers keeping men and women from equally participating in the occupational sphere. Yet the sex-typing of occupations remains a salient factor in the process of occupational choice. To the question, "What do you want to be?" elementary girls still answer teacher and nurse, and boys answer police*man*, fire*man*, and football player. Children readily perceive the sex-typed nature of the work world and assume that it is the way the world should be. Studies of elementary school children indicate that not only do they choose sex-typed occupations for themselves, they are also reluctant to acknowledge the possibility that most jobs are equally suitable for men and women.

There is some indication that males and, to a greater degree, females are becoming somewhat less likely to stereotype occupations. A recent study, by Shepard & Hess (1975), found that eighth graders of both sexes felt that professions such as bankers and doctors were appropriate for both sexes, and the percentage saying certain extremely sex-typed occupations such as firefighter, car repairer, plumber, and truck driver were equally suitable for both sexes had increased over earlier studies. However, the majority of both males and females still considered these jobs inappropriate for women. A 1977 study of Utah adults (Albrecht) found that a higher percentage of women than men, felt that jobs were equally suitable for males and females, and both felt that higher prestige professional jobs more equally suitable than lower prestige jobs.

Although inroads have been made in many sectors, the problem remains critical. Most people still feel that there are many occupations which are not suitable for both sexes, and even those who are willing to concede that most jobs are equally suitable, still consider only sex-typed occupations for themselves. Obviously many barriers remain to equal participation by both males and females in all aspects of the occupational sphere. Furthermore, many of the occupational-technical fields seem to be the most resistant to change.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The present study was undertaken in order to investigate the factors which are still functioning as barriers to the entrance of both men and women into nontraditional careers. It is hoped that the results can be utilized by counselors, teachers, program developers, industry, and others who are in the process of trying to help men and women make career choices.

NONTRADITIONAL CAREERS – DEFINITION

There is no one recognized definition of a nontraditional career or a nontraditional occupational program. Researchers have utilized various criteria for defining occupations and the persons in them as nontraditional. Likewise, various criteria have been utilized in defining nontraditional occupational programs. In general, a nontraditional career for a woman is one which has been stereotypically considered "masculine," and a nontraditional career for a man is one which has been stereotypically considered "feminine." Research has shown that perceptions of jobs as masculine or feminine closely parallel the actual numbers of males and females employed in that occupation (Shiner, 1975). In order to make the

definition as easily understood as possible, the questionnaire utilized in this study defined a nontraditional job for a woman as "one in which most of the workers are men," and a nontraditional job for a man as "one in which most of the workers are women."

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Oppenheimer, V.K. Demographic influence on female employment and the status of women. *American Journal of Sociology*, 1973, *78*, 946-961.

Shiner, E. H. Sexual stereotypes of occupations. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 1975, 1, 99-111.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

INSTRUMENT

The findings presented in this pamphlet represent the responses of 1,350 students to the Career Aspiration Profile, an instrument developed for use in this study. The Career Aspiration Profile is a survey instrument which solicits responses to a variety of items dealing with career choice, focusing on those factors perceived by both men and women to be barriers to their entrance into nontraditional careers.

RESPONDENTS

The respondents included a random sample of high school seniors from the Houston Independeent School District and students from two year institutions (Houston Community College System, Galveston College, and College of the Mainland) and four year institutions (University of Houston, Texas Southern University). Questionnaires were collected from a total of 1,350 students. The number and sex of the participants are indicated in Table 1.

TABLE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS BY SEX

Sex	2 Yr. Institution		4 Yr. Institution		High School	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Male	277	38.8%	88	37.5%	188	46.9%
Female	381	53.4%	142	60.4%	213	53.1%
Sex Unspecified	56	7.8%	5	2.1%		
Total	714	100%	235	100%	401	100%

Sample The sample consisted of 714 two year college students, 235 four year college students, and 400 high school seniors. The high school sample was selected at random by the Houston Independent School District Research Division. It included high school seniors from twenty-seven high schools and learning centers in the district. The two year college students were members of classes from each campus of Houston Community College System, and from Galveston College and College of the Mainland, Texas City. The four year college students were introductory psychology students at the University of Houston, Central Campus, University of Houston Downtown Campus, and Texas Southern University. Questionnaires were collected from a total of 1350 students. The distribution of the sample by sex, race, and institutional type is presented in Table 1.

Collection of Data To obtain the 400 students in the high school sample, a random sample of 400 students and 400 substitute names were drawn. One counselor at each school was provided with an original and a substitute list of the students at that school selected. The counselors were instructed to contact the students on the original list and to substitute, in order, from the second list for those

students declining to participate in the study. The counselors administered the questionnaires, and the students were paid $4.00 for participating.

At the Houston Community College, the questionnaire was administered by instructors in randomly selected classes at the eighteen centers. Where it was not possible to administer the questionnaire in the selected class, the counselor selected another class at that center. Questionnaires were administered by the instructor in two introductory psychology classes at the College of the Mainland and by the counselor to imcoming students in the advising office of Galveston College.

At the University of Houston Downtown Campus and Texas Southern University, the questionnaire was administered in selected psychology classes. At the University of Houston Central Campus, the questionnaire was administered by the project specialist to self-selected students from introductory psychology classes who received credit points for their participation.

Analysis of the Data The data was coded and analyses were performed under the direction of Dr. James McNamara of Texas A & M University, College Station, Texas.

STUDY RESULTS

OCCUPATIONAL PLANS

Participants were asked to indicate their occupational aspirations i.e., the job they would *like* to have, and their occupational expectation i.e., the job they actually *expect* to have. The responses to these questions were coded for level of aspiration and expectation according to the following categories: 1) Professional 2) Manager or administrator 3) Sales 4) Clerical 5) Craft workers 6) Operatives 7) Service workers 8) Farm workers 9) Laborers. In addition, responses were coded according to whether the job was a male-dominated or female-dominated job as determined by the 1970 U.S. Census. The distribution of the expected occupations is presented in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS' OCCUPATIONAL EXPECTATION ACROSS MAJOR OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS

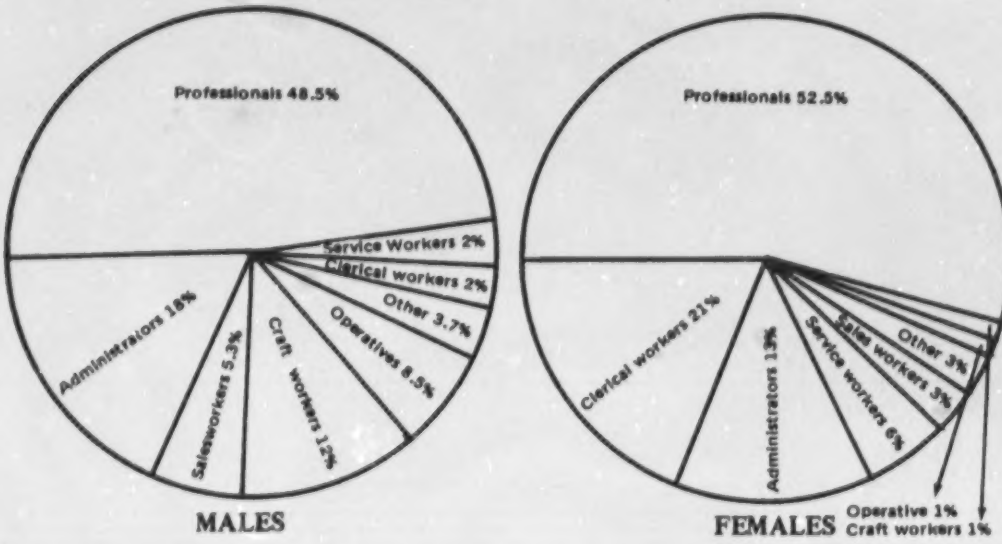
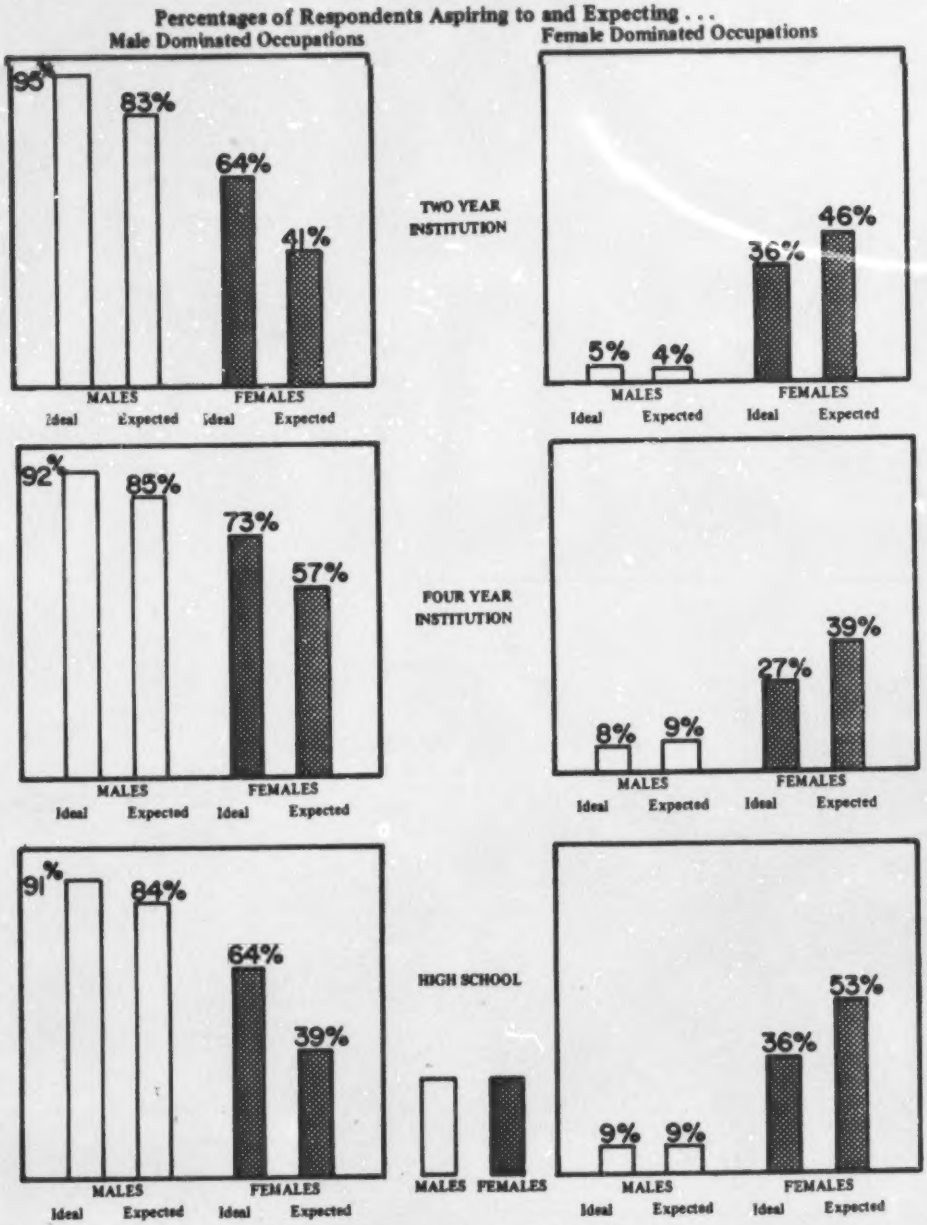


Figure 2 indicates that the largest percentage of both males and females in our total sample expect to enter professional jobs. This cannot be altogether attributed to the fact that a large portion of the sample consists of students in higher education as the percentage of the high school subset expect to enter professional positions in even greater numbers. It should also be noted that some of the most dramatic differences in the expected occupations of males and females occur in the areas of clerical workers and craft workers. However, only 8% of the females indicated clerical occupations as their ideal occupation, and only 6% of the males indicated the crafts as their ideal occupation.

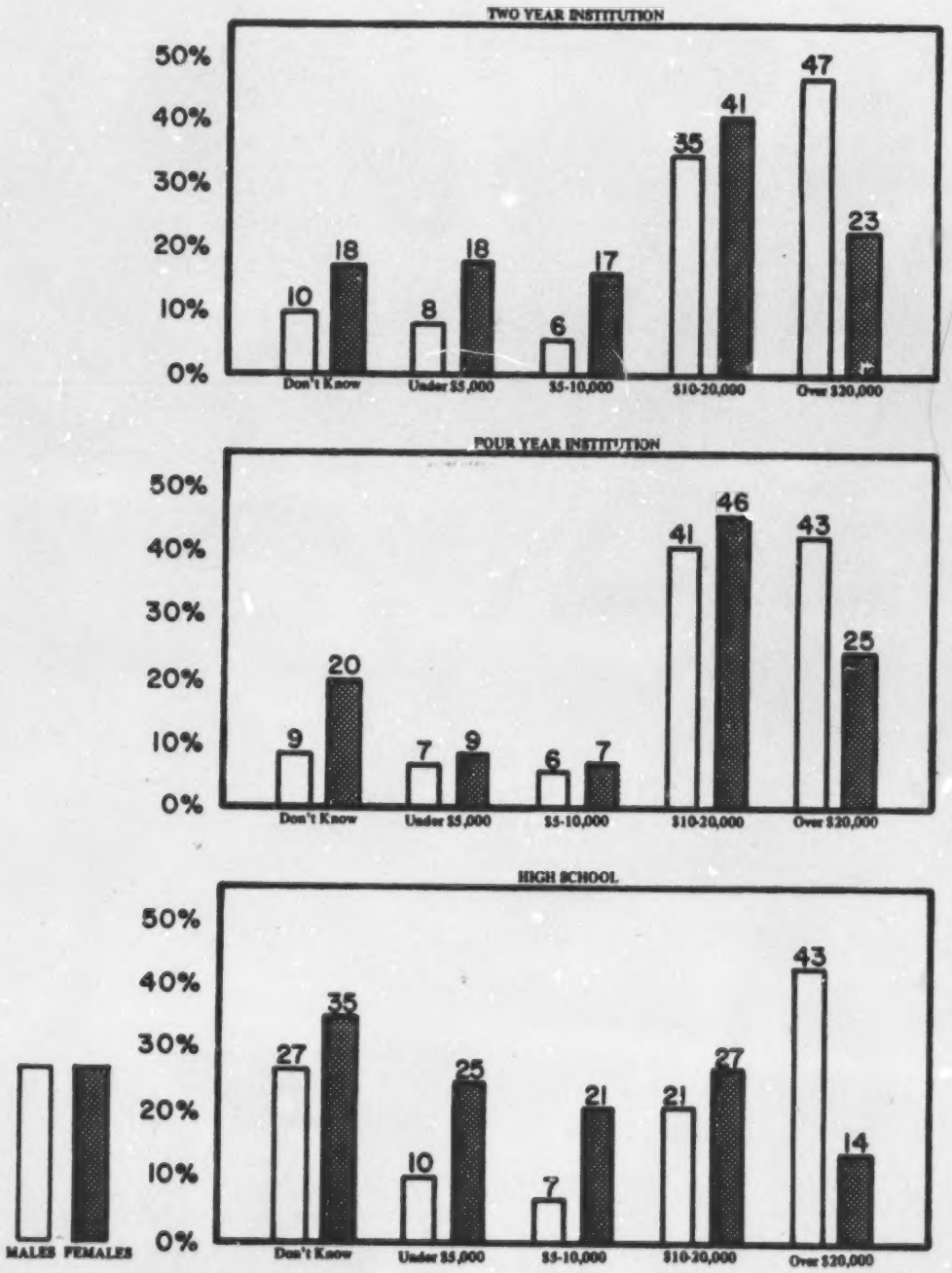
FIGURE 3. SEX-TYPE OF OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS



As illustrated by Figure 3, over 90% of the males at all levels aspire to male-dominated occupations, and over 80% expect to attain that aspiration. The decrease in the number from aspirations to expectations is largely due to those who did not respond in terms of an expected occupation. The pattern among the females is quite different. Among both two year college students and high school students, approximately 64% aspire to male-dominated occupations, but in each case only about 40% expect to attain that occupation. Of the females not expecting to attain their aspiration, approximately 40% of the two year college students and 70% of the high school students expect to enter female-dominated occupations. Among four year college females, a higher percentage, 72.5%, aspire to male-dominated occupations, but 57% actually expect to enter those occupations. Again, of those not expecting to attain their ideal occupation, over 70% expect to enter a female-dominated occupation.

Students were asked to indicate the salary range of the occupation they expect to enter. As illustrated by Figure 4, at every educational level, females have consistently lower salary expectations than do males. In addition, a much larger number of women at every level are unaware of the salary range of the job they expect to enter.

FIGURE 4. SALARY RANGE EXPECTED BY MALES AND FEMALES



EDUCATIONAL PLANS

High school students were also asked their future educational plans. As indicated by Table 2, there is little difference in the plans of high school males and females who plan to work (only) directly after high school and the number who plan to attend a four year institution.

The greatest difference occurs for students planning to enter a community or junior college. Among the males, 7.5% plan to enter a two year academic program, and 16.1% plan to enter an occupational-technical program. On the other hand, among females, 12.2% plan to enter an academic program, and 8.5% plan to enter an occupational-technical program. Therefore, almost twice as many males as females intend to enroll in occupational-technical programs.

TABLE 2. THE EDUCATIONAL PLANS OF HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

Plans After Graduation	Males N = 186		Females N = 213	
	Number	%	Number	%
To work only	37	19.9%	42	19.7%
2 yr. academic program	14	7.5%	26	12.2%
4 yr. academic program	85	45.6%	102	47.9%
Vocational-Technical Program	30	16.1%	18	8.5%
No plans	3	1.6%	2	.9%
Other	21	11.3%	35	16.4%
Total	190	102%*	225	105.6%*

*Due to multiple responses

THE ROLE OF OTHERS IN INFLUENCING OCCUPATIONAL CHOICE

The assumption that parents play an important role in the occupational choice process was supported by this study. Among males, the father ranked either first or second in all groups as the person most influential in job selection. Among the females, mother ranked first or second, while father's influence was very low. The percentage of males ranking their mother as one of the most influential factors in their career choice varied from group to group. Mother's influence ranged from 3.6% among four year college students to 13.8% among high school students. Overall, as might be expected, parental influence was strongest among high school students.

Both males and females indicated that teachers have significant influence on career choice. Counselors, on the other hand, were perceived as very low influencers, the range being from 1.7% among two year college females to 7% among four year college females. Tables 3 and 4 present the rank order within each group of the most frequently cited influencers and the percentage of respondents naming that person.

TABLE 3. PERSONS INFLUENCING MALES' CHOICE OF CAREERS

Person Indicated As Highest Influence	2 Yr. Institution		4 Yr. Institution		High School	
	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%
Friend	1	13%	2	15%	2	15%
Father	2	12%	2	15%	1	22%
Associate	3	12%	3	13%	6	8%
Teacher	3	12%	1	16%	4	12%
Mother	6	6%	5	4%	3	14%

TABLE 4. PERSONS INFLUENCING FEMALES' CHOICE OF CAREERS

Person Indicated As Highest Influence	2 Yr. Institution		4 Yr. Institution		High School	
	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%
Mother	2	11%	2	17%	1	22%
Teacher	2	12%	1	18%	3	16%
Relative	4	10%	3	14%	2	17%
Associate	1	15%	4	11%	5	7.6%

Respondents were also asked to judge if the persons on a list of "significant others" would be encouraging, discouraging, or neutral if the respondent indicated a desire to enter a nontraditional career. As shown by Figures 5 and 6, the majority of students at all levels felt that the people in their lives would generally be more encouraging than discouraging. A larger percentage of the females than males felt that they would receive encouragement, but the differences were not great.

Both women and men felt that they would receive the most encouragement from female friends. However, only 7% of the females and 3% of the males stated that female friends influenced their career choice. On the other hand, male friends were among the highest discouragers for both males and females. Among the males, same sex friends were among the highest influencers of occupational choice. Therefore, while female friends may encourage entrance into nontraditional careers, their opinions appear to have relatively little influence.

In rating parents, mothers were perceived as somewhat more encouraging than fathers. However, overall, males saw their mothers as both more encouraging and less discouraging than females did. Among high school males, for example, 14% felt their mothers would discourage them from a nontraditional occupation, whereas, 28% of the high school females felt their mothers would discourage them.

The students' perceptions of their parents' hypothetical response to a nontraditional job choice is significant in light of the fact that among students who stated that a *person* influenced them in their choice of career, fathers were among the highest influencers for males and mothers for females. In general, the females perceived more discouragement from their parents than the males did. Among the three groups, high school students perceived their parents as more supportive of a nontraditional career choice than either two year college or four year college students. This may, to some degree, reflect the age difference of the parents of the three groups, the younger parents tending toward less traditional views.

As mentioned previously, counselors and teachers were perceived as the highest encouragers and the lowest discouragers. This re-emphasizes the important role teachers can play in influencing movement into non-traditional careers. Counselors, while perceived as the highest encouragers, were, like female friends, among the lowest influencers. The reasons for this are not clear, but is suspected that the realities of the counselor's role leaves little actual time for career exploration with individual students.

FIGURE 5. PERCEIVED ENCOURAGEMENT BY OTHERS FOR ENTRY INTO NONTRADITIONAL CAREERS

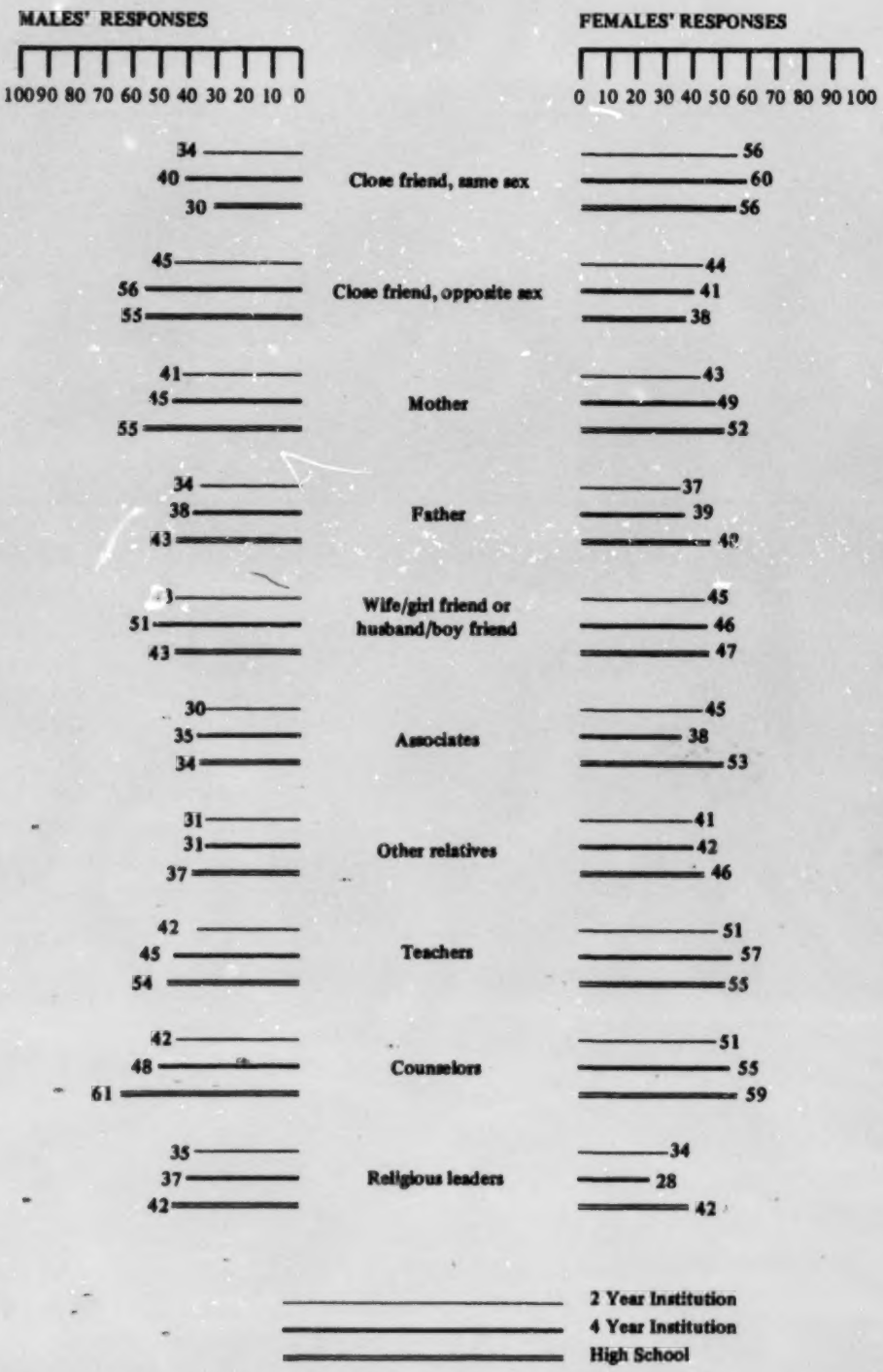
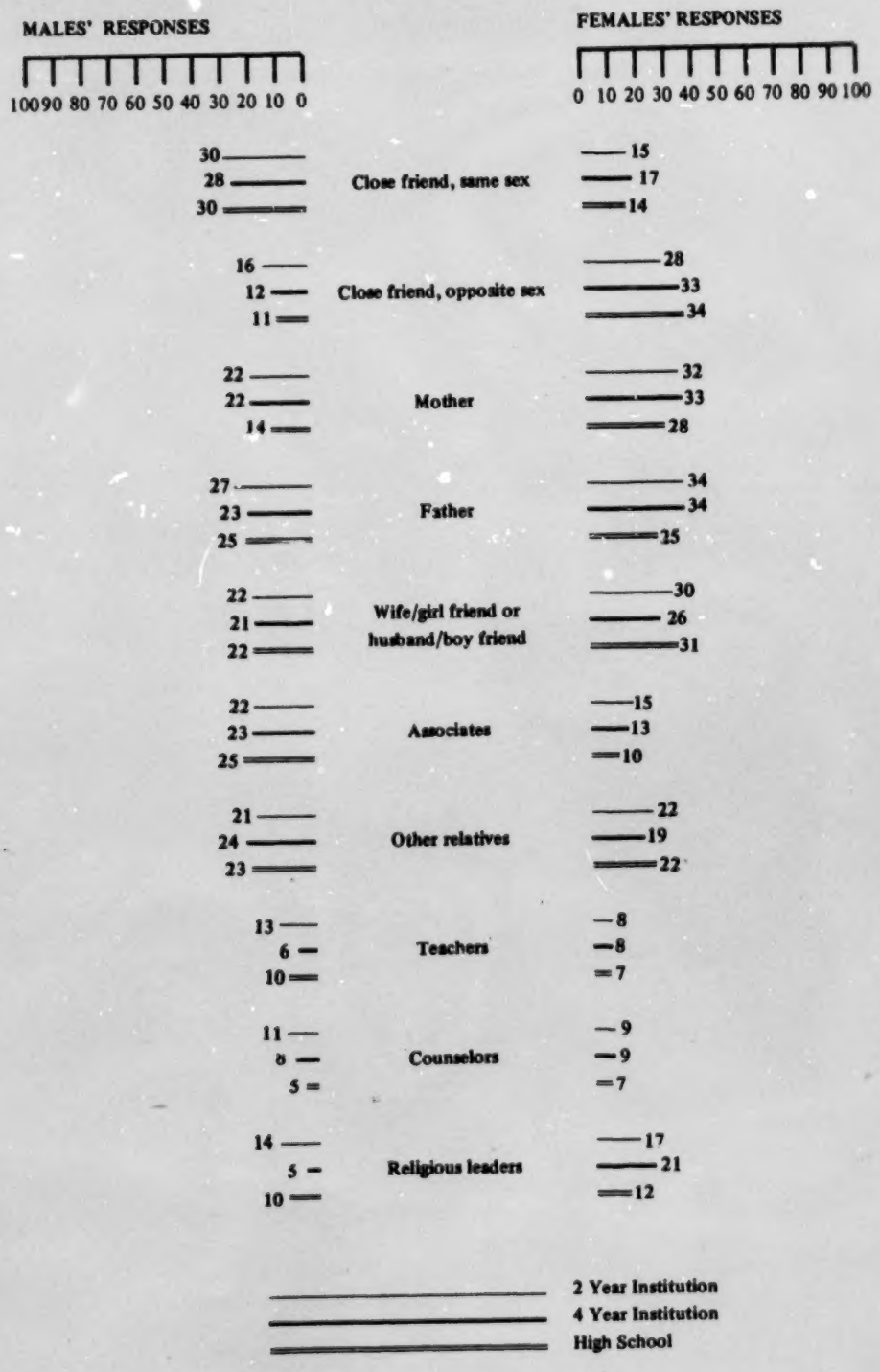


FIGURE 6. PERCEIVED DISCOURAGEMENT BY OTHERS FOR ENTRY INTO NONTRADITIONAL CAREERS



TRAINING NEEDED TO OBTAIN THE IDEAL JOB

The fact that both males and females continue to aspire to sex-typed jobs is indicated from their perceived needs for training required to obtain the ideal job. From a list of 13 areas of possible training needs, three were consistently ranked among the top five needs for both males and females. These were: advanced academic training, verbal communication skills, and interpersonal skills. As illustrated in Tables 5 and 6, in each of these areas, the females indicated a higher need for skill development. The remaining two areas are broken along sex-typed lines, with males desiring math and technical skills, and the females, helping skills. It is interesting to note that both two year and four year college females ranked the need for leadership skills third among all possible choices. This may indicate an increased interest in management roles on the part of females. At the same time, however, a low percentage of the high school females (18.9%) indicated a need for leadership development.

It is also important to point out that among males, four year college males contributed significantly to the high ranking of verbal skills and interpersonal skills. The four year population consisted of students in introductory psychology classes. The responses of a general college population might be quite different. Among the two year and particularly the high school males, verbal and interpersonal skills were seen as considerably less important.

TABLE 5. AREAS OF NEEDED SKILL DEVELOPMENT CITED BY MALES

Skill Area	Percent Citing Area As A Need		
	2 Yr. Institution N = 227	4 Yr. Institution N = 88	High School N = 187
Advanced academic training	42.4%	48.8%	39.5%
Technical skills	32.8%	21.6%	32.6%
Verbal communication skills	26.5%	36.3%	21.3%
Mathematical skills	20.6%	31.8%	24.5%
Interpersonal skills	18.5%	33%	16.5%

TABLE 6. AREAS OF NEEDED SKILL DEVELOPMENT CITED BY FEMALES

Skill Area	Percent Citing Area As A Need: 2 Yr. Institution N = 377	4 Yr. Institution N = 141	High School N = 213
Advanced academic training	48.2%	61.9%	42.7%
Verbal communication skills	28%	42.6%	35.2%
Leadership skills	26.2%	36%	18.9%
Interpersonal skills	19.3%	31.9%	25.8%
Helping skills	20.4%	32.6%	23.5%

The respondents were also asked to indicate job-seeking skills that they needed assistance in developing. Overall, responses for males and females were similar at all levels. The areas of greatest need were in developing a resume, learning about job opportunities in the field, and learning about working conditions. In general, the females indicated a greater need for information about job opportunities, working conditions, and salary than the males did. This is consistent with the large number of females who stated they didn't know the salary range of their expected occupation. Males reported a greater need for help in selecting a job field, sending for job information, and talking to company representatives.

FIGURE 7. PERCENTAGES OF RESPONDENTS NEEDING HELP IN JOB SEEKING AREAS

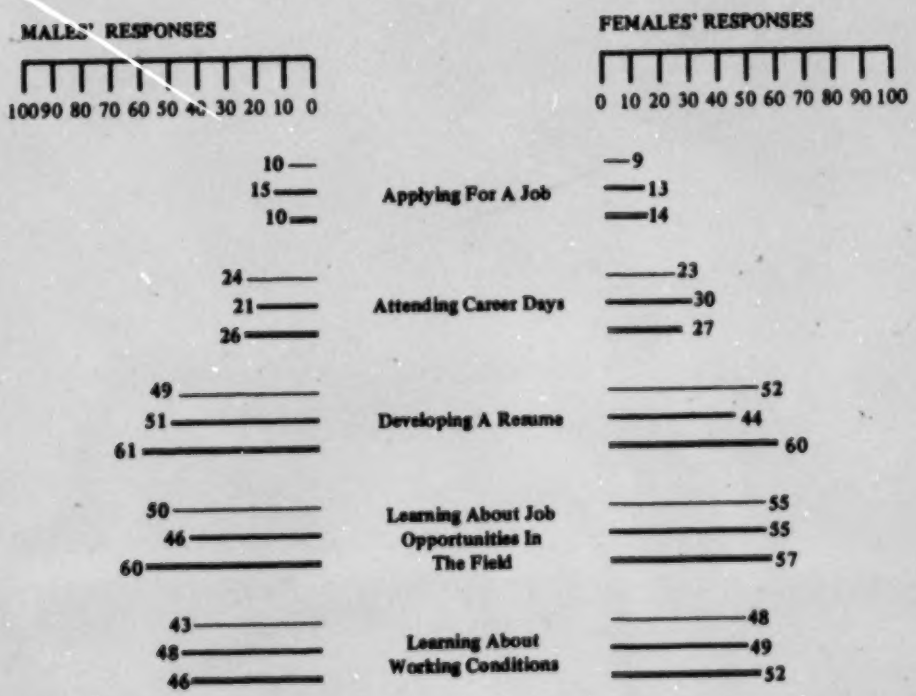


FIGURE 7. PERCENTAGES OF RESPONDENTS NEEDING HELP IN JOB SEEKING AREAS

OCCUPATIONAL-TECHNICAL SEX-TYPING

Respondents were asked to rate twenty-two occupational-technical fields according to their appropriateness for: women only, men only, or both men and women. The occupations included several which were felt to be traditionally classified as women's jobs e.g., child care, secretarial work, nursing; or men's jobs e.g., construction, machine shop, automobile repair; and sex role neutral jobs e.g., commercial art, accounting, data processing.

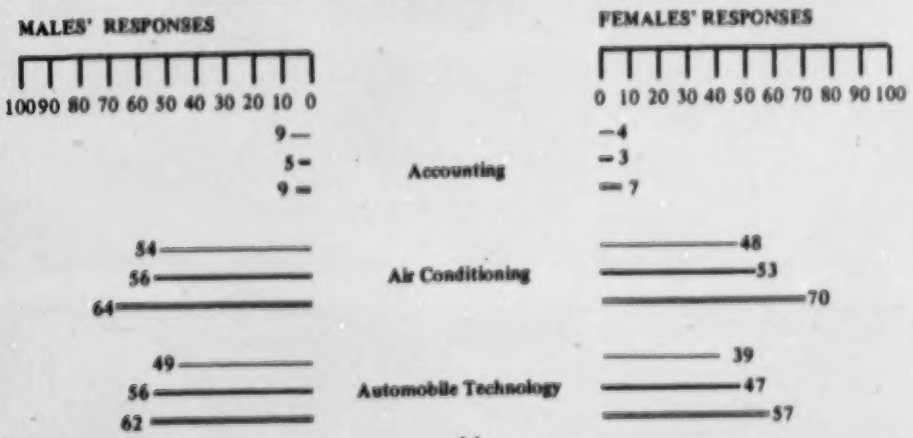
The number of occupations considered appropriate for both men and women by a majority of the respondents are presented in Table 7, and the percentage indicating the particular fields appropriate for only one sex are presented in Figure 8.

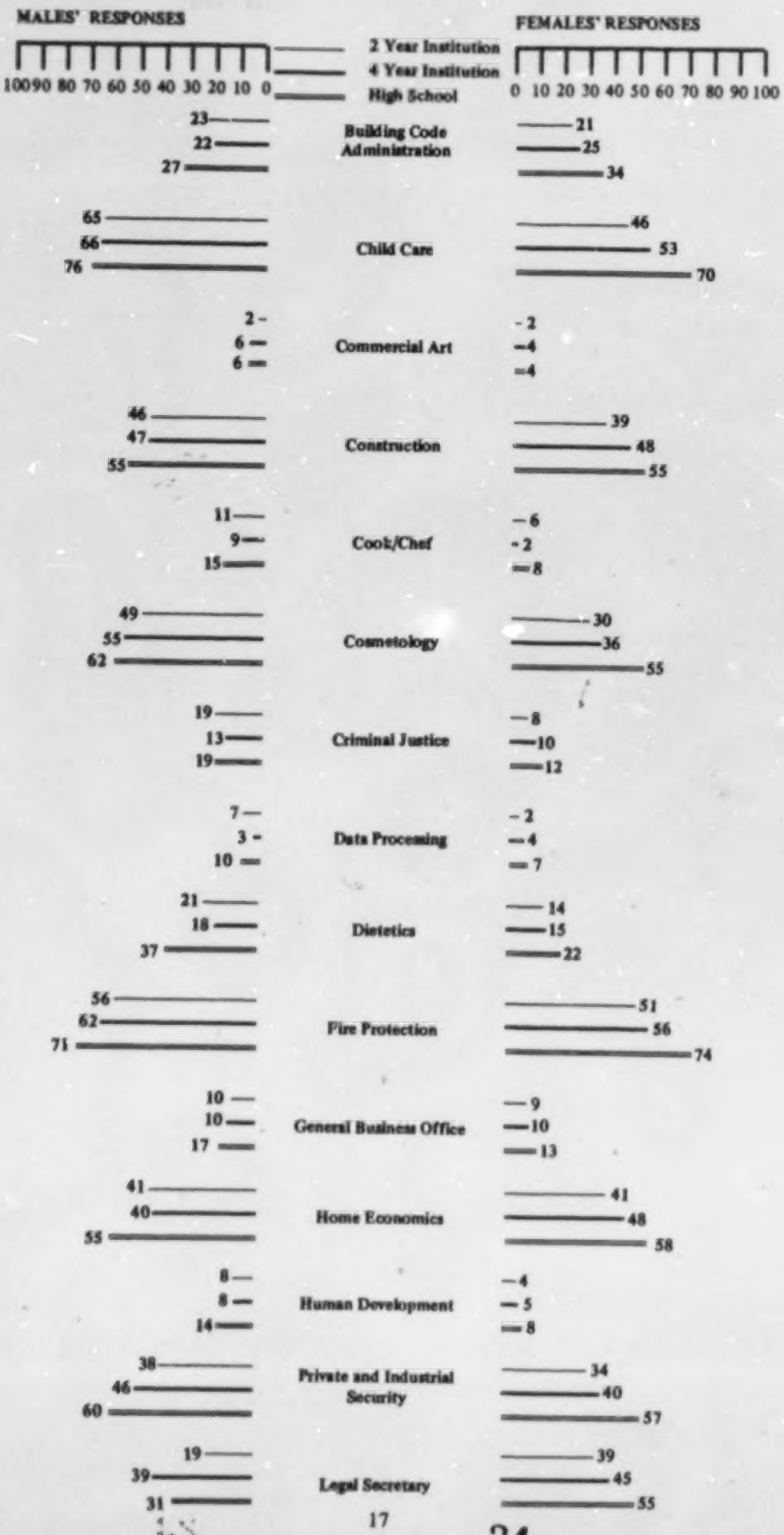
TABLE 7. NUMBER OF OCCUPATIONAL-TECHNICAL FIELDS CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE FOR BOTH SEXES BY A MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS

Two Yr. Institution		Four Yr. Institution		High School	
Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
21	19	20	16	14	10

As indicated by the tables, two year college students were the most liberal and high school students the least liberal in their attitudes toward the sex appropriateness of occupations. It is hypothesized that the more liberal attitudes of the two year college students are the results of their exposure to students working in nontraditional areas. Conversely, the high school students have had relatively less exposure. Consistent with the findings of previous research, the females at every level of our sample were more liberal than the males. Also consistent with other studies was the finding that the "male" occupations were most sex-typed. Of the "female" occupations, only child care was considered as inappropriate for both sexes by a majority of the respondents. Among the "male" occupations, fire protection, air conditioning, automotive technology, and machine shop were considered to be appropriate only for males by a majority of both males and females.

FIGURE 8. PERCENTAGE OF INDIVIDUALS WHO FEEL CAREERS ARE FOR ONE SEX ONLY



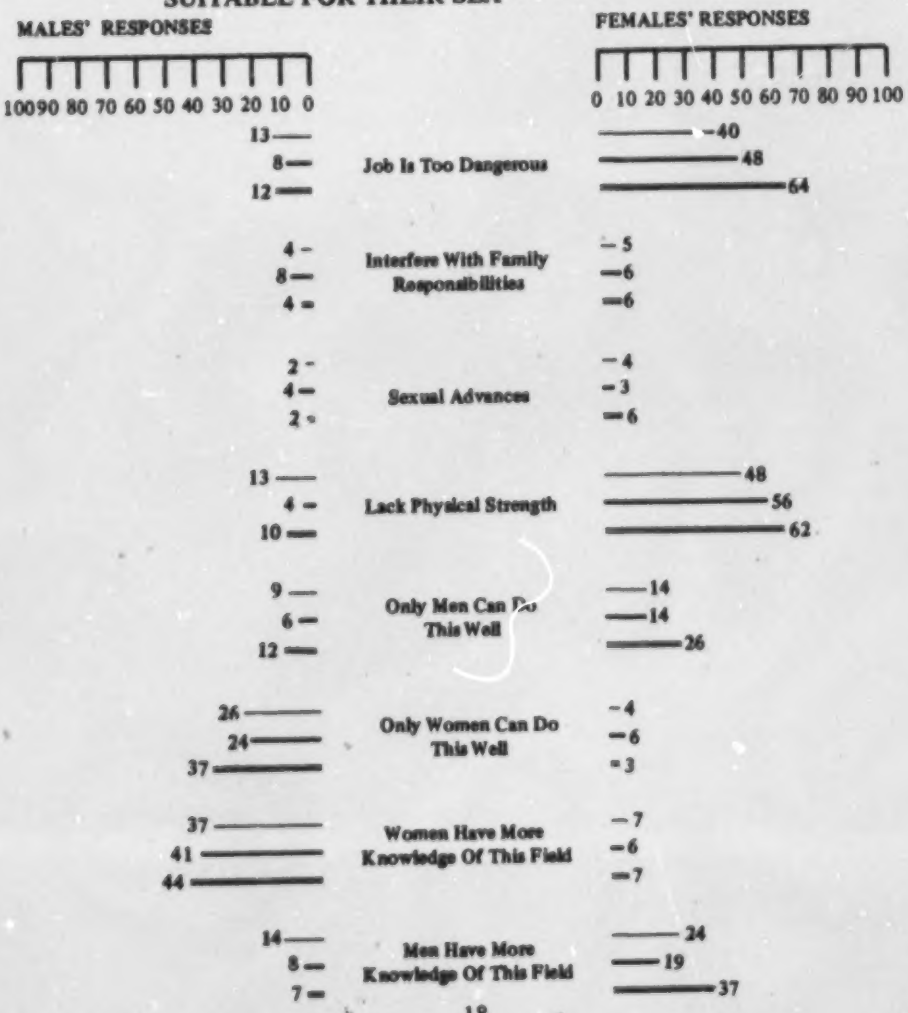

MALES' RESPONSES
FEMALES' RESPONSES
2 Year Institution
4 Year Institution
High School
10090 80 70 60 50 40 30 20 10 0
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
Building Code Administration
23
22
27
21
25
34
Child Care
65
66
76
46
53
70
Commercial Art
2
6
6
2
4
4
Construction
46
47
55
39
48
55
Cook/Chef
11
9
15
6
2
8
Cosmetology
49
55
62
30
36
55
Criminal Justice
19
13
19
8
10
12
Data Processing
7
3
10
2
4
7
Dietetics
21
18
37
14
15
22
Fire Protection
56
62
71
51
56
74
General Business Office
10
10
17
9
10
13
Home Economics
41
40
55
41
48
58
Human Development
8
8
14
4
5
8
Private and Industrial Security
38
46
60
34
40
57
Legal Secretary
19
39
31
39
45
55

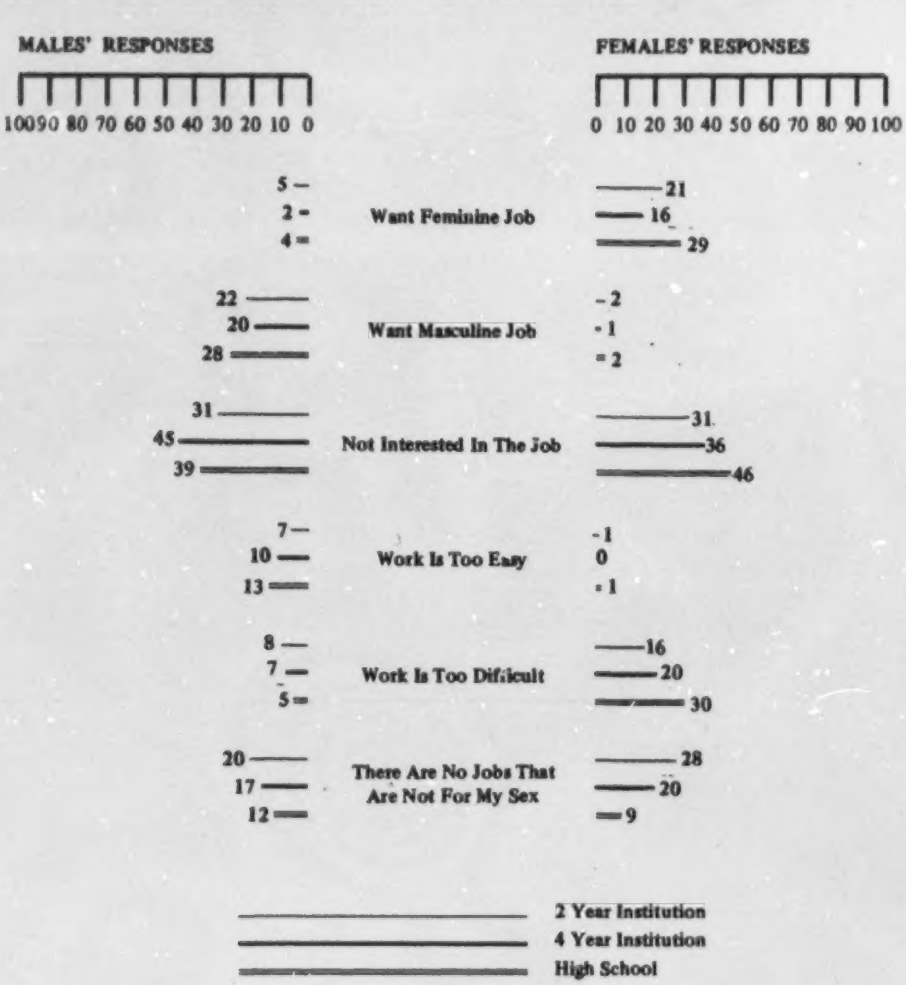
BARRIERS TO ENTRANCE INTO OCCUPATIONAL-TECHNICAL FIELDS

After indicating the occupational-technical fields which the respondents felt were not appropriate for their sex, they were asked to indicate the reasons they would not work in those areas. As indicated by Figure 9, the most obvious reasons for avoiding these occupations appear to be related to sex-role stereotyping. The male students most often cited lack of interest in careers that they did not feel were appropriate for their sex. These students were also more likely than women to feel the opposite sex possesed skills and abilities that they did not. Lack of interest in nontraditional jobs was also a pattern mentioned by women. However, there was a much more pronounced concern with the danger associated with a nontraditional career and their lack of physical strength.

It was also interesting to note that, although the percentages were small, females were more likely to say the "male" jobs were too difficult, and the males were more likely to say the "female" jobs were too easy. Of equal interest were the reasons which were not frequently cited. Inability to learn the skills and lack of acceptance from fellow workers were not seen as sufficient reasons for avoiding these careers.

FIGURE 9. REASONS WHY STUDENTS WOULD NOT ENTER OCCUPATIONAL-TECHNICAL FIELDS SEEN AS NOT SUITABLE FOR THEIR SEX





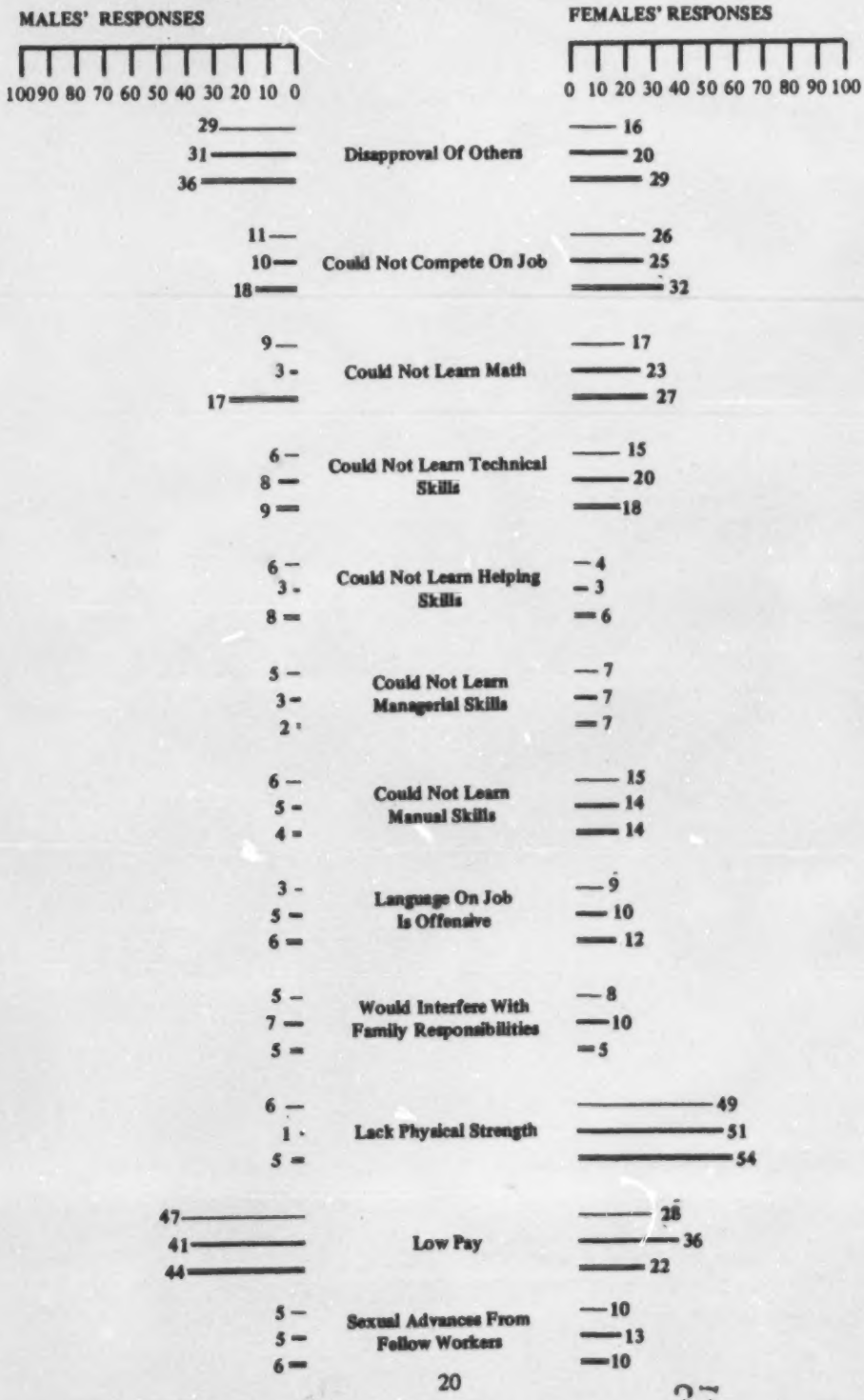
BARRIERS TO ENTRANCE INTO NONTRADITIONAL CAREERS

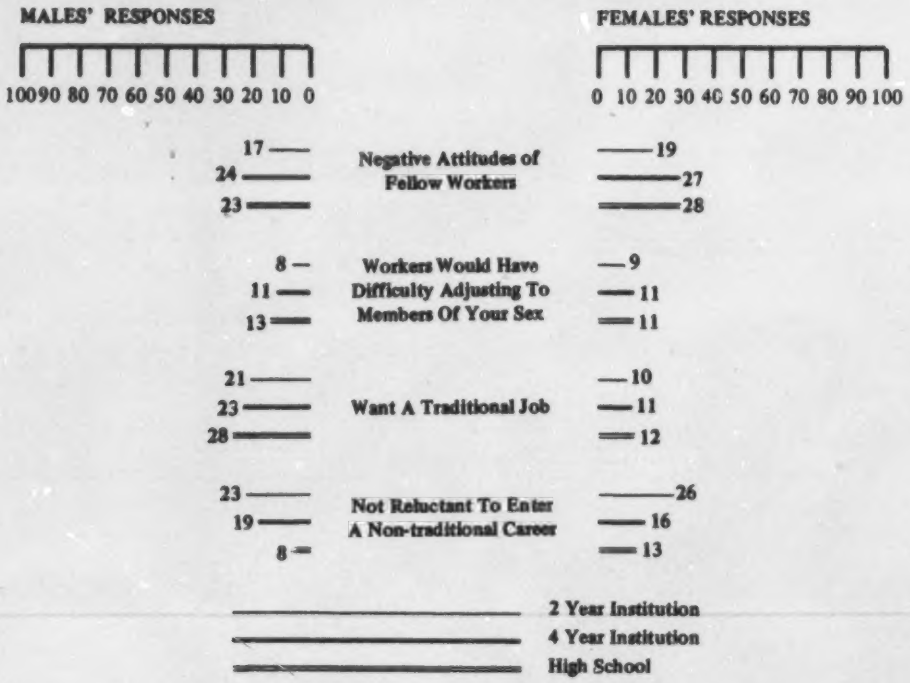
The respondents were next asked to indicate the reasons they would be reluctant to enter a nontraditional career. As indicated by Figure 10, the reason most frequently cited by the male students was the low salaries paid by most of the nontraditional careers for men. The other reasons mentioned by the male students were socially oriented, namely – disapproval from others, negative attitudes from fellow workers, and the desire to have a traditional career. The reasons cited by females appeared to be more closely related to their perceived inability to perform: lack of physical strength, inability to compete, difficulty learning math and technical skills. Low pay was also a major concern of the female students although it was not as strongly emphasized as it was for the males. The fact that females expressed concern over low salaries in male-dominated occupations is consistent with their expressed need for salary information.

It should be noted (Figure 10) that lack of physical strength was the only reason given by over fifty percent of any subsample. It appears there are no factors which are so widely perceived as barriers that they could be cited as *the* reasons why people are reluctant to enter nontraditional careers. Rather, it seems that there are many reasons, and that these reasons vary from person to person.

As in the previous questions dealing with barriers to occupational-technical areas, the factors which were *not* perceived as barriers were significant. Neither males or females anticipated difficulties with learning management skills or helping skills. Females were only slightly more concerned than males about sexual advances from fellow workers and family responsibilities. The fact that family responsibilities was not perceived as a barrier indicates a significant shift in thinking on the part of females.

FIGURE 10. REASONS CITED FOR RELUCTANCE TO ENTER A NONTRADITIONAL CAREER





STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE USEFULNESS OF VARIOUS METHODS FOR NONTRADITIONAL CAREER RECRUITMENT

Students were asked to rate various methods of recruitment as to their "usefulness" in attracting them to a nontraditional career. These methods included such things as advertisements, counseling methods, and other means of obtaining information about nontraditional careers. Almost all the methods were considered either "useful" or "very useful" by a majority of the students at all levels. Females were somewhat more likely to say that the various methods would be useful, perhaps indicating a greater predisposition to entering nontraditional areas. Overall, salary was considered the most useful information, particularly for men, and it was in the top three for both men and women. Career education was also consistently cited for its usefulness in recruiting people into nontraditional careers. Other methods freqeuntly mentioned as being useful were involvement activities such as visiting the job site, work experience in the field, talking to company representatives, and talking to workers of the same sex in the nontraditional area. Female students also highly rated group discussions with members of both sexes. Rated lowest by both sexes were group discussions with members of their own sex. The following is a list of methods which at least half of all the respondents felt would be useful in attracting them to a nontraditional career:

- Career Education Programs
- Job-Site Visits
- Experimental Work Periods
- Discussions with Industry Representatives
- Discussions with Workers of of the Same Sex in Nontraditional Jobs
- Television Ads
- Newspaper Ads
- Discussions with Friends Working in Nontraditional Jobs
- Reading about People Working in Nontraditional Jobs
- Individual Discussions with Counselors
- Group Discussions with Members of Both Sexes
- Radio Ads

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

Occupational and educational plans. The study indicated that although there has been a marked increase in the number of women aspiring to male-dominated occupations, the majority still expect to enter female-dominated occupations. Men, to a greater degree, desire and expect to enter male-dominated occupations. In addition, as a function of their occupational choices, females expect to attain significantly lower salary level than males do. This is in spite of similar educational plans in all areas except occupational-technical education which fewer females than males expect to enter.

The role of others in influencing occupational choice. The study supported the assumption that parents play an important role in influencing occupational choice. For males, fathers were more influential, and for females, mothers were more influential. Parents were generally perceived to be supportive of students' desires to enter nontraditional careers. Females, however, perceived more discouragement, particularly from their fathers. Among school personnel, teachers are very influential, while counselors appear to exert little influence. Teachers and counselors were seen as among the most supportive, while male friends were seen as least encouraging for both males and females. In general, students felt they would receive more encouragement than discouragement.

Perceived Educational Needs. Students' perceived training needs also reflected the sex-typed nature of their occupational choices, with males' needs centered around technical skills, and females' around interpersonal skills. Their needs in terms of job-seeking skills were more similar. Developing a resume, learning about job opportunities, and learning about working conditions were rated as the greatest needs.

Occupational Sex-typing. Students at all levels generally felt most occupational-technical fields were suitable for both sexes. High school students, however, were considerably more stereotypic in their responses than were the other two groups. In response to why they would sex-type some areas as "female jobs," males responded that females had "inherently" more knowledge of these fields. Females, on the other hand, named danger and physical demands of the work as the reason to sex-type some areas as "male jobs."

Barriers to Entrance into Nontraditional Careers. Of the reasons cited for reluctance to enter nontraditional careers, only physical strength was seen as a barrier by the majority of the females. Overall, it appeared that no particular reasons were felt to be overwhelming barriers. Of those most frequently cited, males were most concerned with low salaries and negative attitudes from others. Females were most concerned with their inabilities to perform on the job.

Methods Useful for Recruitment into Nontraditional Careers. The majority of students felt that almost all the methods suggested for attracting them into nontraditional careers would be useful. Among the methods rated highest by both sexes were career education, experimental work periods, salary information, and job-site visits.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) An intensive effort must be undertaken to increase young peoples' awareness of career options. Those involved in this effort must become affirmative in encouraging students to seriously consider nontraditional options.

2) In light of parents' strong influence, they need to be given more information in order to make them aware of the realities of the work world and the career options available to their children. Fathers, especially, need to be given information on the total range of occupational possibilities for their daughters.

3) Counselors were generally considered as encouragers; however, they had little influence in career selection. It is hypothesized that there are two primary reasons why counselors are perceived as low influencers:

   the lack of time provided them for career exploration activities

   the emphasis which has been placed on the counseling role as one of support rather than change.

   It is suggested that counselors incorporate the role of active change agent and encourage the expansion of career options to nontraditional areas.

4) As work experiences were seen as an important factor in the movement into nontraditional careers, it is suggested that those who have a part in placing students in work experiences to be cognizant of this fact and make every effort to offer students experience in nontraditional jobs or in jobs where they will be exposed to people working in nontraditional areas. Businesses should be aware of the importance of work experiences, and provide more opportunities for part-time work in nontraditional areas, especially for high school students.

5) The study showed that females are less knowledgeable than males about the salaries of various occupations, yet salary was an important factor in the movement into nontraditional careers. Thus every effort should be made to provide females with complete and accurate salary projections. In addition, females should be made more aware of the realities of their economic position and the probability of relying on their own income.

6) Females need to be made more aware of occupational technical education as an option. However, awareness alone, will not be enough. They need to be actively encouraged to consider this option.

7) It is suggested that beginning vocational courses in junior high and high school not be specialized, but rather include an introduction to a variety of occupational areas. The emphasis might be on learning those basic skills one needs for living and preparing to work in the modern world. This would give both males and females a wider exposure to all aspects of vocational training.

8) Many females, it was found, have doubts concerning their ability to perform male-dominated jobs. They need not only assistance in assessing their abilities, but encouragement to persevere so that small barriers do not become large ones. In addition, they need accurate information about job requirements. Very often jobs are not as demanding as they are perceived.

9) Much of the effort in recruitment has been aimed at women and their fears. The study shows that for both males and females, the attitudes of males are perceived as a real barrier. Efforts should be expanded to changing the attitudes of males so that they become more supportive of both males and females entering nontraditional areas.

10) Finally, the study supports the continued need for career education. High school students who have been involved in career education, saw it as a positive influence. It is suggested that career education become *affirmative* rather than neutral in its approach. Programs such as career days, should encourage the exploration of careers which students know little about rather than those with which they are already familiar, such as law and teaching.

CAREER ASPIRATION PROFILE

HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDY

INSTRUCTIONS

Each of the following questions requires that you either circle one or more responses or fill in a blank. They should be answered in this manner:

1. What kind of car do you like best? (circle one)

   1. Honda Civic
   2. Ford Granada
   3. Cadillac Seville

2. What is your favorite color?

   RED

1. What are your plans after high school/college? (circle any that apply)

   1. To work
   2. To attend a two-year academic program
   3. To attend a four-year academic program
   4. To attend a vocational/technical program
   5. Have no plans
   6. Other, (please specify)_____

   _____

2. After you finish all of your schooling, if you could have any job you wanted, what job would you like to have, that is, your ideal job. (Be as specific as possible, for example, Television announcer, Elementary School Teacher, Homemaker)

3. What job do you think you will probably have, that is, your expected job? (Be as specific as possible)

_____

_____

4. If there is a difference between your ideal and expected job what is (are) the reason(s) you feel you might not get your ideal job? (Please circle or any that apply)
   1. The job might cause problems in your personal life.
   2. Lack of know-how in that area
   3. Lack of money for education or training
   4. The job is too hard
   5. Too few jobs in that area
   6. Training is too long
   7. Training required is too hard
   8. Must start on a lower job and work up to ideal job
   9. Don't know what you will do
   10. Other, please specify_____

5. What is the salary range for the job you expect to have? (Please circle one)
   1. Less than $5,000
   2. $5,001 to $10,000
   3. $10,001 to $29,000
   4. $20,001 and over
   5. Don't know

6. How much money do you feel you will earn per hour in your expected job? (Circle one)
   1. Less than $2.50
   2. $2.51 to $4.50
   3. $4.51 to $6.50
   4. $6.51 to $8.50
   5. Above $8.50
   6. Don't know

7. Are jobs plentiful in this field? (Circle one)
   1. Yes
   2. No
   3. Don't know

8. Please circle the areas in which you feel that you require skill development to get your ideal job.
   1. Basic Academic Skills - Math and Reading
   2. Advanced academic training (college)
   3. Career exploration skills (deciding what you want to do)
   4. Advanced vocational training
   5. Interviewing and job seeking skills
   6. Verbal communication skills (talking to people)
   7. Written communication skills (writing correctly)
   8. Interpersonal skills (getting along with people)
   9. Mathematical skills
   10. Technical skills
   11. Leadership skills
   12. Helping skills (helping other people solve their problems)
   13. Other, please specify_____

_____

9. Have you ever had a meeting with a counselor in which you talked about job fields that were right for you? (circle one)
   1. Yes
   2. No.

10. Have you ever had a class in which you discussed different job fields and the way for you to choose one? (circle one)
   1. Yes.
   2. No.

INSTRUCTIONS

Some of the following questions require that you select one of several different responses and place the number of the response in front of the item. Answer those questions in this manner:

1 = I know how to start this activity
2 = I need help doing this
3 = This is not important

1 Operating a computer

2 Driving a motor vehicle

11. Below is a list of things (activities) that may be involved in finding out about a job or field that might be right for you. Place a 1, 2 or 3 in front of each activity to describe your knowledge of that activity.

1 = I know how to start this activity
2 = I need help doing this
3 = This is not important

1. _____ Applying for the job
2. _____ Attending career days
3. _____ Developing a resume
4. _____ Finding out about job opportunities in the field
5. _____ Finding out about working conditions on the job
6. _____ Finding out what the salary is
7. _____ Going to an employment office
8. _____ Picking a job field
9. _____ Reading about jobs
10. _____ Sending for information about the job
11. _____ Taking job ability tests
12. _____ Talking to company representatives
13. _____ Talking to people working in the job
14. _____ Visiting job sites
15. _____ Working (part-time or volunteer) in the field

12. Who or what has influenced you most in choosing your career?

_____

13. Was this influence a person or an event? (circle one)
   1. Person
   2. Event

   IF the response to #12 was a PERSON:

14. Since the major influence on your career selection was a person, how is this person related to you? (parent, friend, teacher, etc.) (circle the best one)
    1. Close friend same sex
    2. Close friend opposite sex
    3. Mother
    4. Father
    5. Wife/girl friend
    6. Husband/boy friend
    7. Associate (people at work, school, and church whose opinion counts)
    8. Relative
    9. Teacher
    10. Counselor
    11. Religious leader
    12. Other, (please specify)_____
    13. Does not apply to my situation

    IF the response to #12 was a PERSON:

15. Was this person a man or woman: (circle one)
    1. Man
    2. Woman
    3. Does not apply to my situation

    IF the response to #12 was an EVENT:

16. Since the major influence on your career selection was an event, what was the nature of the event: (circle one)
    1. Work Experience
    2. Visiting a Job Site
    3. Reading about Careers
    4. Career Education Program
    5. Radio Ads
    6. Television Ads
    7. Newspaper and Magazine Ads
    8. Other (please specify) _____
    9. Does not apply to my situation

INSTRUCTIONS

Some of the following questions require that you select from a range of responses and circle the response that most closely resembles your feelings on the subject. Answer these questions in this manner:

	ALWAYS	ALMOST ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	ALMOST NEVER	NEVER
1. Do you like school?	1	(2)	3	4	5
2. Do you enjoy dancing?	1	2	(3)	4	5

17. Below is a list of concerns that some people feel are important in selecting a job or job field. Circle the number which best describes the importance of that job concern to you.

		VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	NEUTRAL	NOT IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
1.	Provides excellent income	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Pleasant work surroundings	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Many available jobs	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Opportunity for advancement	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Have interest or ability in area	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Opportunity to work with a variety of people	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Dressing attractively	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Prestige (people will look up to you)	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Doing something that you enjoy	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Making a contribution to society	1	2	3	4	5

18. The following is a list of job areas. Read through the list very carefully and as you read, place a 1,2 or 3 by jobs that you feel are suitable for:

1 = WOMEN ONLY
2 = MEN ONLY
3 = MEN OR WOMEN

___ Accounting
___ Air Conditioning/Refrigeration
___ Automotive Technology
___ Building Code Administration
___ Child Care
___ Commercial Art
___ Construction Technology
___ Cook/Chef
___ Cosmetology
___ Criminal Justice
___ Data Processing
___ Dietetics
___ Fire Protection
___ General Business Office
___ Home Economics
___ Human Development
___ Industrial and Private Security
___ Legal Secretarial
___ Machine Shop
___ Medical Secretarial
___ Nursing
___ Occupational Therapy
___ Offset Printing
___ Optometric Technology
___ Photography
___ Radio and Television Repair
___ Real Estate
___ Small Gas Engine Repair
___ Upholstery
___ Welding

19. LOOK AT QUESTION #18 AGAIN; for those careers which you felt were NOT for your sex in #18, Circle any of the following reasons WHY YOU would not want to work in those jobs.

1. The job is too dangerous
2. Working with people of the opposite sex makes you uncomfortable
3. Language used by people of the opposite sex is offensive
4. Would interfere with family responsibilities
5. Afraid of sexual advances from fellow workers
6. Lack the physical strength necessary for the job
7. Only men can do these jobs well
8. Only women can do these jobs well
9. Women have more knowledge of these fields

10. Men have more knowledge of these fields
11. Prefer working in a job that is feminine
12. Prefer working in a job that is masculine
13. Not interested in this job
14. Don't think you could learn the skills necessary
15. Prefer working with members of your sex only
16. Prefer working with both sexes
17. Lack of acceptance from your fellow workers
18. Work is too easy
19. Work is too difficult

20. THERE ARE NO JOBS THAT ARE NOT FOR MY SEX
21. Other, please specify_____

_____

NON-TRADITIONAL JOBS

Jobs in which most of the workers are women are Non-Traditional for men. Jobs in which most of the workers are men are Non-Traditional for women.

20. Please write a 1, 2 or 3 for the response you think the following people would make if YOU decided to enter a NON-TRADITIONAL career

1 = ENCOURAGE ME
2 = DISCOURAGE ME
3 = WOULD NEITHER ENCOURAGE NOR DISCOURAGE ME

1. _____ Close friends, same sex
2. _____ Close friends, opposite sex
3. _____ Mother
4. _____ Father
5. _____ Wife/girl friend or Husband/boy friend
6. _____ Associates (people at work, school, church, etc. whose opinion counts)
7. _____ Other relatives (sister, brother, aunts, and uncles)
8. _____ Teachers
9. _____ Counselors
10. _____ Religious leaders

NON-TRADITIONAL JOBS

Jobs in which most of the workers are women are Non-Traditional jobs for men. Jobs in which most of the workers are men are Non-Traditional for women.

21 Circle any of the things listed below which would make you feel reluctant to enter a non-traditional job field.

1. Disapproval from other people in your life
2. Afraid you could not compete successfully on the job
   Afraid you could not learn the skills: (circle any that worry you)
   3. Math
   4. Technical
   5. Helping skills (Helping other people solve their problems)
   6. Managerial
   7. Manual (Working with your hands)
8. Language used by people of the opposite sex is offensive
9. Would interfere with family responsibilities
10. Lack physical strength to do the job
11. Low pay
12. Sexual advances from fellow workers
13. Negative attitudes of fellow workers
14. Fellow workers would have difficulty adjusting to members of your sex
15. Want to work in a traditional job
16. Want to work with both sexes
17. Want to work with people of the same sex

18. NOT RELUCTANT TO ENTER A NON- TRADITIONAL CAREER
19. Other, please specify _____

_____

NON-TRADITIONAL JOBS

Jobs in which most of the workers are women are Non-Traditional jobs for men. Jobs in which most of the workers are men are Non-Traditional for women.

22. Which of the following methods would be most useful in getting you to consider entering a Non-Traditional Career: (Circle 1, 2, 3 or 4 according to your feelings about that method)

	VERY USEFUL	WOULD BE SOMEWHAT USEFUL	WOULD HAVE NO USEFULNESS	WOULD HAVE A NEGATIVE EFFECT
Advertisements:				
1. Radio	1	2	3	4
2. T.V.	1	2	3	4
3. Newspapers	1	2	3	4
Counseling:				
1. Group discussions with members of my sex only	1	2	3	4
2. Group discussions with both men and women	1	2	3	4
3. Individual discussion with a counselor	1	2	3	4
4. Assurance that the men or women would accept you	1	2	3	4
5. Reading about the members of your sex who are already in the job	1	2	3	4
6. Talking to a friend in a non-traditional career	1	2	3	4

Circle 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 according to your feelings:

		STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	INDIFFERENT	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
23.	People are discriminated against on jobs because of their sex	1	2	8	4	5
24.	People are discriminated against on jobs because of their race	1	2	3	4	5
25.	The type of job that I become involved in will depend primarily on my interests and efforts. In other words, I will decide what I will do.	1	2	3	4	5

26. What is your father's or male guardian's usual occupation? _____

27. What is your mother's or female quardian's usual occupation? _____

28. If you are self-supporting, what is your occupation?

_____

29. How much education did your parents or quardian complete? (circle one for each parent)

MOTHER/FEMALE GUARDIAN
1. 8th grade or less
2. did not finish high school
3. high school graduate
4. some college
5. college graduate or beyond

FATHER/MALE GUARDIAN
6. 8th grade or less
7. did not finish high school
8. high school graduate
9. some college
10. college graduate or beyond

30. What type of school do you attend? (circle one)
1. High School
2. Community College
3. Four Year College

31. What is the name of your school?

_____

32. What is your age? (circle one)

1. 16 - 18
2. 19 - 21
3. 22 - 25
4. 26 - 31
5. 32 - 40
6. 41 or above

33. What is your sex? (circle one)

1. Male
2. Female

34. What is your racial ethnic background? (circle one)

1. Afro-American (Black)
2. Euro-American (White)
3. Mexican-American (Chicano)
4. Native-American (Indian)
5. Oriental-American
6. Other _____

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